

sources in two pastures to provide drinking water for our cattle which has been vital during this drought. We were also able to participate in the Stewardship Program through NRCS. Those conservation practices helped retain subsoil moisture which has been critical in the drought conditions we've faced.

We have a 6-year-old son and 4-year-old daughter. We tell them daily how important our jobs are as farmers, how we are truly feeding the world. They are taking true pride and ownership of that and passing a good farm bill only helps stabilize their dreams and ours.

A five-year farm bill gives us the stability to plan ahead for our operation long term. With the limited time Congress has to pass a farm bill before the current one expires, I would encourage lawmakers to look to rural America and realize how much work we can get done in a week. We know that if the farm bill is made a priority, there is enough time to get this bill passed. Thank you again for your work and we urge Congress to pass a farm bill now.

Sincerely,

MIKE AND LORI PESKEY,
Iroquois, S.D.

CREATE A STEM VISA PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. GUTIERREZ) for 5 minutes.

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, today we will vote on a Republican proposal to provide green cards to certain immigrants and to cut the same number of green cards available to other legal immigrants.

How do we determine who gets more green cards and who gets fewer?

For my Republican friends, that's easy. They will provide more green cards to a very narrow number of immigrants they can tolerate—smart immigrants who have been educated in U.S. colleges and universities. They will make other legal immigrants—ones they can't tolerate—pay for that increase.

Meanwhile, Democrats have introduced bills that would also provide green cards to the immigrants who have been educated in U.S. colleges and universities. Our Democratic proposal, however, does not take green cards away from other deserving immigrants who want to come legally and contribute to this country.

On our side of the aisle, we respect all immigrants. Our bill recognizes the value of all of them to our economy and, indeed, to our future. We should not educate some of the world's most talented people in the STEM fields—that's science, technology, engineering, and math—and then send them away to work in foreign lands to compete against us.

Democrats strongly support providing these visas as a way of helping the U.S. economy and creating jobs, not just for the immigrants but for the U.S. workers they will employ and the economic activity they will generate. Democrats want progress. We want visas for STEM graduates. We will work in a bipartisan manner with Republicans to get it done. It's a smart

policy, and it's a just policy. Let me be clear. There is no economic reason—no budget reason, no jobs reason—to punish other immigrants because we give out STEM visas. Absolutely none. Let me try to make it simple.

Let's pretend we're not talking about immigrants, because any time some of my Republican friends hear the word "immigrants," they immediately want to punish someone. So let's say, instead of immigrants, we're talking about a family of three children, of three honest and hardworking children. One child wants to go to college to become an industrial engineer, and another wants to go to college to become a math professor. The third—a diligent, industrious child—doesn't want to go to college. Let's say he wants to start a landscaping business. He wants to work with the land and get his hands dirty.

The Republican plan is simple—to help the kids going to college and to cut the other kid off. He's out. Tough luck. He's not smart enough for this family. The Democratic plan is just as simple. We need scientists, engineers and mathematicians, but we need other workers, too—construction workers, machinists, chefs, entrepreneurs. We need immigrants from all over the world—from every continent, including Africa. Everyone who works hard helps our economy, so let's be helpful to everyone. That's the Democratic belief, but that's not the Republican plan today.

Maybe we shouldn't be surprised. After all, this proposal comes from a party whose Presidential nominee doesn't care about 47 percent of America. Call it the Mitt Romney deadbeat doctrine in which half of all Americans are freeloaders. Maybe that's all we need to know about this Republican plan. I suppose, in the Republican world, STEM visas are for the half of America that works, and the other visas are for the deadbeats that Mitt Romney doesn't care about—you know, the freeloaders like your parents on Social Security or your son or daughter with that student loan or the Pell Grant—or like my parents, who came from Puerto Rico with only an elementary school education, but who worked hard every day and put two kids through college and one of them in the Congress of the United States. Yes, those deadbeats. If my parents had needed visas to come to this country today under this new plan, they would never have gotten a chance.

We are changing the rules about who can—and more importantly—about who cannot come to America. So unless you view the world through Mitt Romney's "us versus them" vision of America, there is no reason to cut visas today. None. I want to stand up for the ZOE LOFGREN provision of immigration—the Democratic vision of immigration. We're not divided into a country where people who gather at a fancy country club and write \$50,000 checks to political candidates are good

and where the people who stand to run and serve them the food are bad. America is not half deadbeats. We are one America, and we have a chance to prove it today.

Democrats are offering a sensible plan that doesn't divide us. It values all work from all immigrants. It achieves our common goal of creating a STEM visa program, keeping more scientists and engineers right here in America, making us stronger. In Mitt Romney's world, if you help one person, you have to punish another. I think that's wrong. I urge my colleagues to pass a fair and sensible plan to create a STEM visa program, and let's do it without punishing a single person.

IN HONOR OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL CHRISTOPHER RAIBLE, A FALLEN SOLDIER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MURPHY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MURPHY of Pennsylvania. This morning, I rise with a heavy heart, but on behalf of a grateful Nation, to honor a soldier born and raised in southwestern Pennsylvania, who gave his life on September 14 in service to our country.

This week, he returned to his home, the United States, where he will be laid to rest. Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Raible, commanding officer of Marine Attack Squadron 211, died in the assault on Camp Bastion, which is connected to the American-run base Camp Leatherneck, in Helmand Province, Afghanistan. It was a despicable attack by the Taliban that not only took the life of this dedicated, respected, and brave marine but that also resulted in the worst loss of U.S. military aircraft since the Vietnam war.

But this morning, I rise so my colleagues, my constituents at home in Westmoreland County, and the entire Nation will know more about this courageous marine known as "Otis," who commanded a Marine Harrier jet squadron.

After graduating at the top of his class from Norwin High School, where he was a starting defensive back for the Knights, Lieutenant Colonel Raible earned his degree in civil engineering from Pittsburgh's prestigious Carnegie Mellon University. Following his college graduation, Raible joined the United States Marine Corps, and by 1998 had become a naval aviator. A natural leader, Raible rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel last summer, having received numerous military honors along the way, including a Meritorious Service Medal, 10 Strike-Flight awards, and a Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, to name just a few.

In support of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom, Raible deployed many times to serve our Nation. Colonel Raible commanded the only Marine Harrier squadron in

Afghanistan in which he flew over 2,000 hours in Harrier aircraft.

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A southwestern Pennsylvanian at heart, it should come as no surprise that Otis was known, while seated in the cockpit, to listen to the Steelers while flying in the skies over Iraq. But more than anything, Lieutenant Colonel Raible was a father, a husband, and a son; a proud dad of three children, ages 11, 9, and 2. Otis so loved and was loved by his family.

As his mother Belvina of North Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, said, her son died defending all that he held dear. "He was the best of the best," she said. Indeed, Mrs. Raible, he was.

Today, we as a Nation say "thank you" to Lieutenant Colonel Raible and to his entire family. We're so grateful for your service and for your sacrifice protecting our freedom. Through your service, you have made your family and your Nation better. Through your sacrifice, you have made America stronger. Through your courage, you have made America proud.

Many times, I'm sure you soared above the clouds where you could touch the face of God. Now you rest in his loving arms for eternity. Thank you, Colonel. Our Nation thanks you, as well.

THE PUERTO RICO POLITICAL STATUS PLEBISCITE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Puerto Rico (Mr. PIERLUISI) for 5 minutes.

Mr. PIERLUISI. On November 6, the U.S. territory of Puerto Rico will hold a plebiscite on the island's political future. Voters will be asked if they want to continue the current status or to seek a new status. Voters will also be asked to express their preference among the three alternatives to the current status recognized as legally and politically viable by the Federal Government and international law: independence, nationhood in free association with the United States, and statehood.

This plebiscite is different from previous plebiscites in Puerto Rico. It will be the first time that island residents have an opportunity to answer "yes" or "no" to the question of whether they support the status that Puerto Rico has had since 1898. This question has inherent value in a democracy where a government's legitimacy is based on the consent of the governed. And this plebiscite will only include those status options identified as valid by Congress and the White House. True self-determination is a choice among options that can be implemented, not an exercise in wishful thinking.

If a majority of voters express satisfaction with the current status, Puerto Rico's status would not change at this time. Likewise, if there is majority support to change the current status

but not majority support for one of the three alternatives, Puerto Rico's current status would also continue. However, if the majority votes against the status quo and in favor of statehood, free association, or independence, Congress and the President should take action that honors that choice.

Top Democratic and Republican leaders have indicated they will take the results of this plebiscite seriously. That is as it should be. The United States is the greatest democracy in history and a champion of peaceful self-determination around the world. Consistent with this principle, I am confident that Federal officials will respect the choice made by their Federal citizens from Puerto Rico if they express a clear desire to change the island status.

Now I want to speak directly to the men and women I represent in Congress. This plebiscite will have a real impact on you, your family, and the future of the island we love. It is important that you make your voice heard and your vote count.

It is well-known that I oppose the current status and advocate for statehood for Puerto Rico. Whether it is called "territory," "commonwealth," or "colony," the current status denies us the most fundamental rights in a democracy: the right to choose the leaders who make our national laws, and the right to equal treatment under those laws. In my view, the current status is an affront to our dignity.

In my office hangs a framed photo of servicemembers from the island who have lost their lives since 2001. They're the latest in a long line of Puerto Rican patriots who have fought and fallen for this Nation. This photo inspires me, but it also makes me sad. I cannot understand how we, such a proud people, can voluntarily submit to a status that makes us second-class citizens in the country that we have defended for generations.

I realize that after nearly 115 years, the prospect of change can be unsettling, but I also know that there is nothing more powerful than an idea whose time has come. We deserve better than what we have, and the time has come for us to seek a new status that will empower us to realize our full potential.

Among the alternatives to the current status, I believe statehood is the right choice. Independence and free association are worthy options, but both would place at risk our U.S. citizenship and Federal support under programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security for future generations of Puerto Ricans. Because I believe the overwhelming majority of Puerto Ricans are opposed to breaking or substantially weakening the strong political, social, and economic bonds that have formed between Puerto Rico and the United States, I think the only viable alternative to the status quo is statehood. At this critical moment in history, we should aspire to perfect our union, not to sever it.

The current status is about second-class citizenship, which we should rise up to reject. Independence and free association are about separation, which would diminish the opportunities available to our children and grandchildren. Statehood is about equal treatment. It would deliver to Puerto Rico what all free people deserve: full voting rights, full self-government, and full equality under the law.

This November, I hope that the U.S. citizens of Puerto Rico will send a clear message to Congress that they're ready to make a change.

IN HONOR OF OFFICER BRADLEY FOX

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FITZPATRICK) for 5 minutes.

Mr. FITZPATRICK. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning to honor the life and memory of Pennsylvania Police Officer Bradley Fox.

Brad Fox was a 5-year veteran of the Plymouth Township Police Department in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

Having grown up in my home of Bucks County, Officer Fox graduated from William Tennent High School and went on to serve his country for 10 years in the United States Marine Corps.

A well-decorated soldier, Officer Fox received, among other accolades, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, the Combat Action Ribbon, and the National Defense Service Medal.

Upon returning from his military service, Officer Fox joined his local police force in Montgomery County, where he built a life for himself, his wife, Lynsay, their daughter, and a second child who is on the way.

On the night of Thursday, September 13, the family, friends, and fellow officers of Brad Fox received the phone call they hoped would never come. Officer Fox was responding to a report of a hit-and-run in his suburban Philadelphia township. As he was investigating the incident, both Officer Fox and his canine companion were ambushed by the suspect and attacked, which left Officer Fox fatally wounded.

Yesterday afternoon, I attended the burial services for Officer Fox at the Washington Crossing National Cemetery in Bucks County. The show of support from the local law enforcement community and the people of southeastern Pennsylvania as a whole was inspiring and it was heartfelt.

To see that in such a short lifetime this father, husband, brother, son, veteran, and police officer had touched so many lives was a testament to the kind of person that Brad Fox was. He dedicated his entire life to service to his community and to his country and should serve as an example to every one of us.

Every day in Montgomery County and in Bucks County and in communities across this great Nation, law enforcement officers, firefighters, and